

19 September 2024

Gwyn Walker
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Tēnā koe Gwyn,

Your request for official information, reference: HNZ00061918

Thank you for your email on 22 August 2024, asking Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora (Health NZ) for the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

- 1) *All meeting minutes of GAPCAG from inception until now;*
- 2) *Confirmation whether or not the GAPCAG has studied and considered the findings of NHS England's review of the use of puberty blockers (The Cass Review) and if so, whether the GAPCAG agrees with its conclusions and expects to adopt its recommendations;*
- 3) *In reference to the minutes of the Feb 15th 2024 GAPCAG meeting, item 9, Other business:*
 - a) *why the group concluded that with respect to the unreleased Puberty Blockers Evidence Review led by the Ministry of Health "the evidence was unlikely to bring up anything unknown regarding the use of puberty blockers."*
 - b) *whether the group now considers that conclusion to be premature, given the fact the review was not released at that time and given the growing criticism of the evidence supporting the use of puberty blockers both within New Zealand and internationally.*

Response

For the sake of clarity, I will answer each question in turn.

- 1) *All meeting minutes of GAPCAG from inception until now;*

All meeting minutes from the Gender Affirming Primary Care Advisory Group (GAPCAG) from March 2023 to July 2024 are attached as **Appendix 1**.

You will note that some information has been withheld under the following sections of the Act:

- Section 9(2)(a); to protect the privacy of natural persons, including those deceased.
- Section 9(2)(b)(ii); as, if released, it would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.
- Section 9(2)(g)(ii); to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the protection of officials from improper pressure or harassment.

We have considered any countervailing public interests in disclosure of this information. However, we do not consider that the public interests outweigh the harm identified above.

- 2) *Confirmation whether or not the GAPCAG has studied and considered the findings of NHS England's review of the use of puberty blockers (The Cass Review) and if so, whether the GAPCAG agrees with its conclusions and expects to adopt its recommendations;*

The GAPCAG has not as a group considered the findings of the Cass Review as reviewing research is not within the scope of the group. The purpose of the GAPCAG (as specified in the terms of reference) is to provide high-quality strategic advice to ensure that the programme meets Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations and responsibilities, delivers equitable outcomes for Māori and Pacific peoples, and provides high quality gender-affirming primary care. This advice is used by Health NZ to inform, improve, and support programme activities and policy.

3) *In reference to the minutes of the Feb 15th 2024 GAPCAG meeting, item 9, Other business:*

a) *why the group concluded that with respect to the unreleased Puberty Blockers Evidence Review led by the Ministry of Health "the evidence was unlikely to bring up anything unknown regarding the use of puberty blockers."*

b) *whether the group now considers that conclusion to be premature, given the fact the review was not released at that time and given the growing criticism of the evidence supporting the use of puberty blockers both within New Zealand and internationally.*

The purpose of the Act is to provide access to official information held by the Government, to enable participation in law-making and promote the accountability of Ministers and officials. There is no requirement under the Act for agencies to create new information or provide an opinion. This part of your request is therefore refused under section 18(g) of the Act, because the information requested is not held by us, nor have we reason to believe it is held by any other agency subject to the Act.

How to get in touch

If you have any questions, you can contact us at h.nzOIA@tewhatoru.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Health NZ may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Deborah Woodley

Director Starting Well

Planning, Funding and Outcomes

TeWhatuOra.govt.nz

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Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government